



TALES OF FANTASY AND SUSPENSE!

No.3

10c

FEAR!



Monster of the Storm!
.....
The Case of the
Painted Beasts!
.....
The Mirror of Isis!
.....
Was He Dead?

WEB COMIC UNIVERSE.COM





THE CASE OF THE PAINTED MONSTER!

...THE STORY OF A STRANGE PAINTING THAT
TOOK REVENGE ON THOSE THAT
SCOFFED AT IT!

THE CURSE OF
AN EGYPTIAN
KING...DEAD
FOR
MANY
CENTURIES...
REACHES OUT
TO FULFILL ITS
MISSION OF
DEATH! READ
WHAT TAKES
PLACE WHEN
BRAD STANFIELD
UNCOVERS THE...

"MIRROR OF ISIS!"



WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE JACK
BURTON? HOW COULD YOU ANSWER THE
BAFFLING QUESTION..."WAS HE DEAD?"

A MAN
WHO
MURDERED
WITHOUT
REASON...
AND THEN
CAME
BACK FROM
THE DEAD
AS
THE...

"MONSTER OF THE STORM!"

THEY LAUGHED AT TOMMY DUGAN WHEN HE TOLD THEM WHAT HE HAD SEEN! NOBODY BELIEVED HIM! MAYBE YOU WON'T EITHER! BUT WHEN THE NEXT FULL MOON COMES, WOULD YOU WANT TO BE NEAR THAT GRUESOME PAINTING? DON'T ANSWER THAT! NOT UNTIL YOU'VE READ WHAT HAPPENED TO TOMMY DUGAN, THE ROOKIE COP, WHEN HE TRIED TO SOLVE . . .

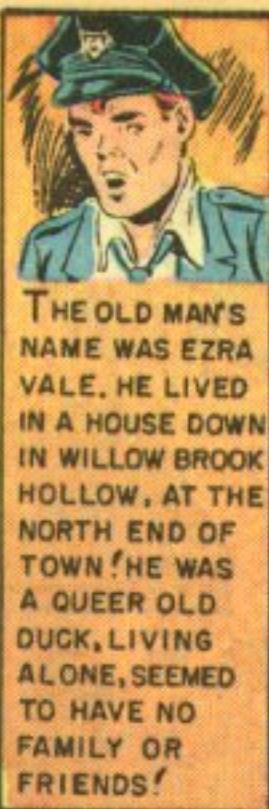
THE CASE OF THE PAINTED BEAST!

NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE--
I'M JUST SEEING
THING!

I'M JUST A
ROOKIE COP--TOMMY
DUGAN! MAYBE I'M CRAZY--BUT
IF YOU WANT TO HEAR WHAT HAP-
PENED TO ME, I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU
STRAIGHT! YOU'RE WELCOME TO IT-- I'VE
HAD ENOUGH!

IT ALL
BEGAN
LAST WIN-
TER, WHEN
MAYOR
CORBIN
PUT AN
ANNOUNCE-
MENT IN
THE MAPLE
VALLEY
WEEKLY
ARGUS,
OUR TOWN
NEWSPAPER!

ANNOUNCEMENT
BY ORDER OF MAYOR JAMES CORBIN
ENTRIES WILL NOW BE RECEIVED FOR
A PAINTING TO BE PURCHASED BY THE
VILLAGE OF MAPLE VALLEY. CANVAS MUST
BE A MINIMUM OF SIX FEET BY SIX FEET.
COMPLETED PAINTING MUST BE SUBMITTED
BY JUNE 1ST. THE JUDGES WILL BE MAYOR
CORBIN AND TOWN CLERK PETER ROLLINS.
THE WINNING CANVAS WILL BE PERMANENTLY
HUNG IN THE ROTUNDA OF THE NEW TOWN
HALL. THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS AS TO
SUBJECT MATTER OF THE PAINTING. ARTISTS
ENTERING THE COMPETITION MUST BE
RESIDENTS OF MAPLE VALLEY.

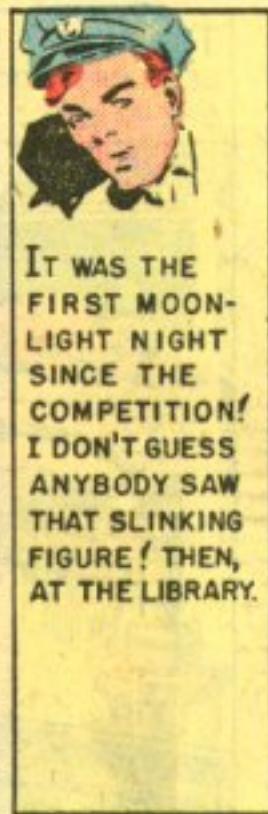


I GUESS THE OLD FELLER WORKED PRETTY HARD ALL SPRING ON HIS PAINTING! THEN, THE END OF MAY, I HAPPENED TO MEET HIM, AND...



THE COMPETING PAINTINGS WERE TO BE UNVEILED IN THE LIBRARY! THERE WAS QUITE A CROWD TAKIN' A LOOK AT THE ENTRIES AS THEY WERE UNVEILED ONE BY ONE!





THE WATCHMAN WAS FOUND NEXT MORNING PRETTY BADLY SMASHED UP! BUT HE WASN'T DEAD, AND WHEN HE CAME BACK TO CONSCIOUSNESS...

I'M TELLIN' YER, IT WASN'T ANYTHING HUMAN! IT WAS HORRIBLE...

GUESS THE MORPHINE WE GAVE HIM STILL HAS HIM FOGGY! HE'S BEEN DREAMING OF WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM! NOW HE'S ALL MIXED UP!



NOBODY SEEMED TO CONNECT THE WATCHMAN'S WILD TALK WITH THAT PAINTING OF OLD MAN VALE'S! BUT MAYOR CORBIN DID! AND THAT EVENING...

THAT FELLOW, FLANAGAN, TALKS ABOUT A MONSTER, MARY! UGH! I'M JUST THINKING CRAZY THINGS, BUT...

DON'T BE SILLY, JIM!



I WAS ONE OF THE TWO JUDGES WHO REJECTED THAT MONSTER PAINTING!

I... WHA... ?!

JIM...
JIM...



THE MAYOR'S WIFE DIDN'T SEE VERY MUCH OF IT! SHE FAINTED!

NO! NO! YOU CAN'T BE ALIVE! YOU'RE JUST A THING PAINTED ON A CANVAS!



EEEEOOOOHH!



THE MAYOR'S WIFE'S STORY WAS PRETTY MUCH LIKE THE STORY OF THE WATCHMAN! THEN, ROLLINS, THE TOWN CLERK, HAD HAD HIS SUPPER! HE WAS AT HOME, WATCHING A BALL GAME ON TELEVISION!



AND AT THAT SAME INSTANT...



I WAS AT THE STATION HOUSE WHEN THE SARGE WAS PHONIN' ROLLINS! I GOT A BRIGHT IDEA, AND I SLIPPED OUT THE SIDE DOOR AND HOT-FOOTED IT OVER TO VALE'S PLACE...

UGH! GIVES YOU THE CREEPS!



I NEVER WAS MUCH ON GHOST STUFF! OLD MAN VALE MIGHT HAVE GONE OFF HIS HEAD... IMPERSONATING A MONSTER. GETTING REVENGE BECAUSE HIS PAINTING WAS REJECTED...

IF I CAN GRAB THIS OLD GEEZER, MAKE HIM CONFESS... I'LL GET A PROMOTION, MAYBE!





I WAS TOO SCARED TO TRY
TO DO ANYTHING!

HELP!
EEEEAAAHH!

I SWEAR IT-- THEY WENT RIGHT
THROUGH THE PAINTING!

NO! NO!
EEEEAAAHH!



I GOT MY WITS
AT LAST, AND...

VALE!
VALE--??!



I LOOKED BEHIND THE PAINTING...

NOTHING HERE!
W-WHERE DID
THEY GO?



THEN I STOOD BEFORE THE PAINTING!
AND THERE WAS THE MONSTER, IN THE
PAINTED SCENE JUST AS HE HAD
ALWAYS BEEN!



THE THREE GNOMES WHO HAD BEEN
IN THE PAINTING WERE DIFFERENT NOW!
AND THE MONSTER WAS SMIRKING!

WHY--WHY, THERE THEY ARE!
MAYOR CORBIN, CLERK ROLLINS,
AN' OLD MAN VALE!

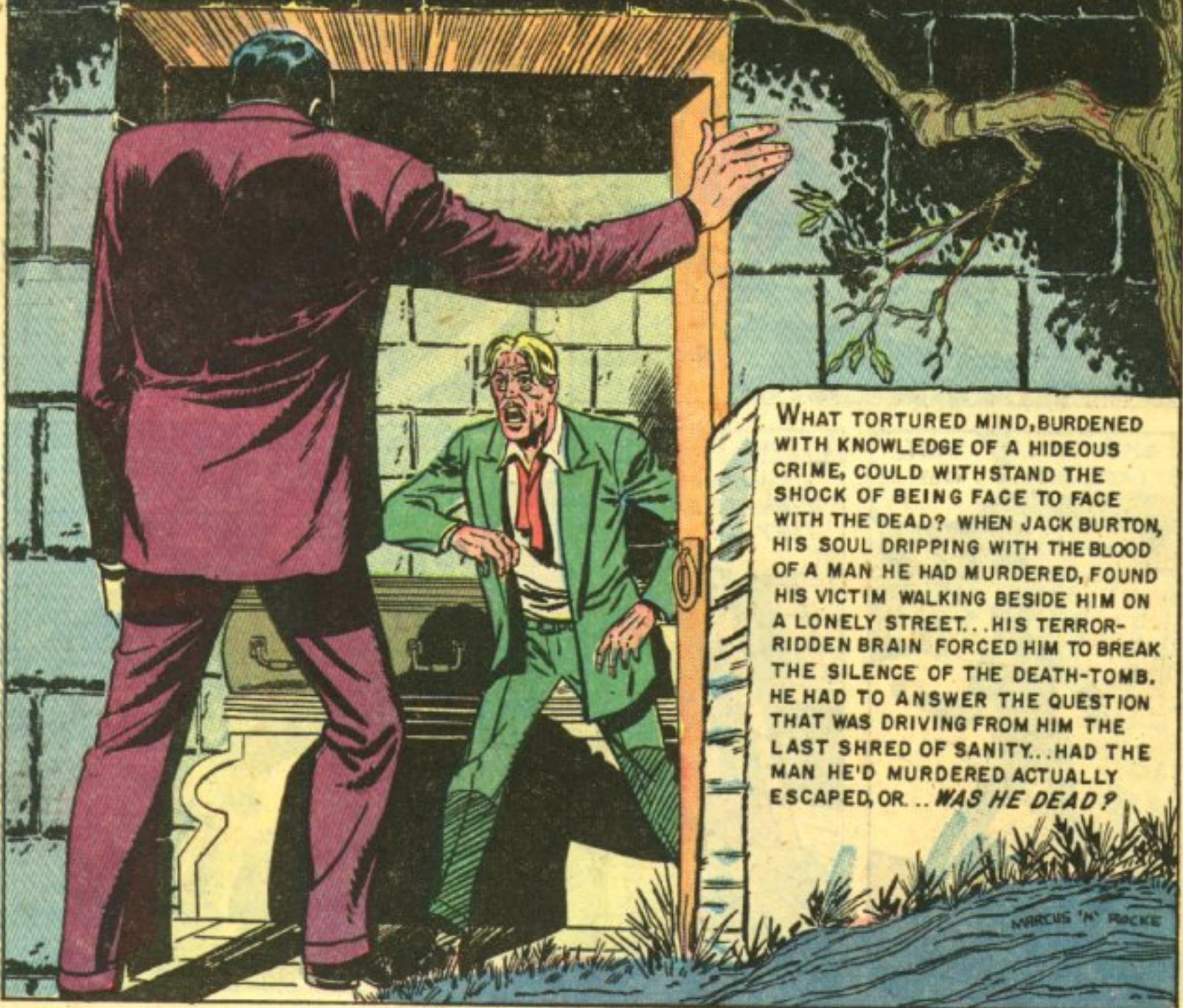


THE POLICE RECORDS SAY THAT THE OLD MAN GOT REVENGE
ON CORBIN AND ROLLINS, HID THEIR BODIES, AND PAINTED
THEIR FIGURES, AND HIMSELF, INTO THE PAINTING! AN' THEN
MADE HIS GETAWAY! OKAY, LET IT GO AT THAT! THEY GOT THE
PAINTING IN THE STATION HOUSE NOW! AN' WHEN THE NEXT
MOONLIGHT NIGHT COMES--YOU THINK I'M GOING TO BE ANY-
WHERE NEAR IT? NOT ME!



THE
END

WAS HE DEAD?



YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, MARILYN!

YOU TALK ABOUT HOW MUCH I MEAN TO YOU. NOW...LET ME SEE YOU PROVE IT!



THE THOUGHT OF MURDERING MARILYN'S HUSBAND BOTH REPULSED AND FASCINATED BURTON, AND...

IT WOULD BE A WAY OUT... BUT....

WHY IF IT ISN'T MY WIFE'S FAVORITE SINGER! HELLO, BURTON!



WHAT WAS IT THAT BROUGHT MARILYN BAKER'S HUSBAND TO THIS BAR..?

BAKER! I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT YOU. MY CAR'S OUTSIDE... HOW ABOUT ME GIVING YOU A LIFT!

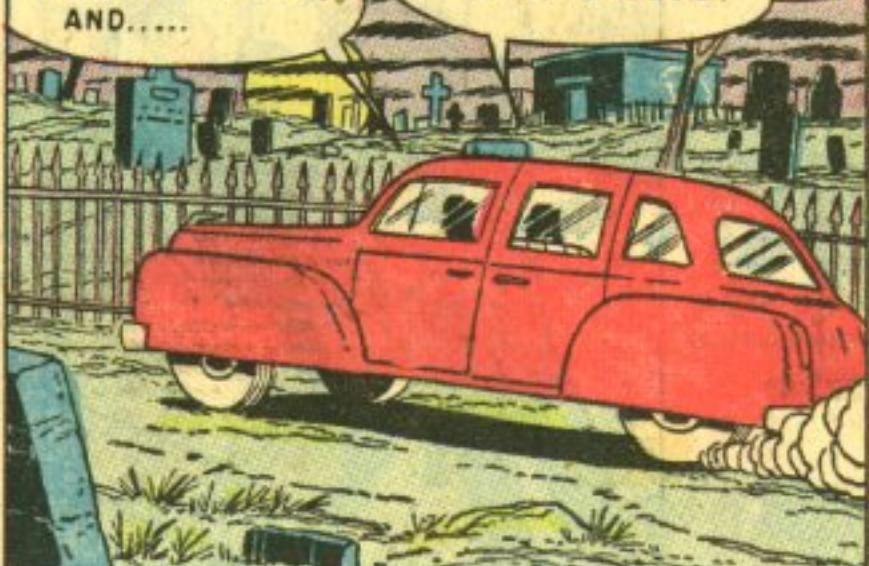
SURE THING... IF YOU THINK YOU'RE IN CONDITION TO DRIVE.



BURTON'S MIND...HAZED BY DRINK... TRIED TO AVOID WHAT WAS ALREADY BECOMING THE INEVITABLE...

LISTEN, BAKER... I'M SURE MARILYN'S TOLD YOU WE'RE IN LOVE, AND.....

YOU CAN BOTH ROT IN HADES BEFORE I LET HER MARRY ANYONE ELSE!



WON'T YOU THINK ABOUT IT?

I'LL NEVER CHANGE... W...WHAT ARE WE STOPPING HERE FOR!



THIS!

ARGH..H..H!



BURTON DRAGGED THE BODY FROM HIS CAR. HIS BRAIN, CLEARED BY THE SHOCK OF WHAT HE HAD DONE, BEGAN TO WORK FRANTICLY...

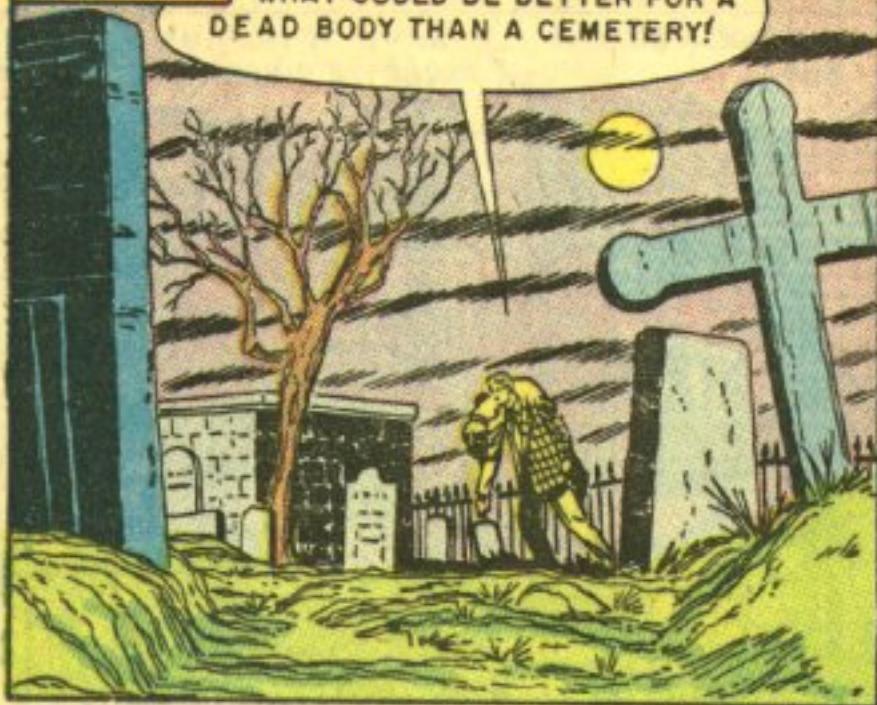
MUST GET RID OF THE BODY!



THEN... JACK BURTON REALIZED WHERE HE HAD STOPPED THE CAR...

WHAT COULD BE BETTER FOR A DEAD BODY THAN A CEMETERY!

NO ONE WILL EVER THINK OF LOOKING IN HERE!



BEHIND THIS PEDESTAL... HE'LL BE COMPLETELY OUT OF SIGHT...

BURTON OPENED THE DOOR OF THE CRYPT, AND STEPPED INSIDE. HE LOCATED THE SPOT HE'D BEEN SEARCHING FOR...



THEN BURTON'S ONLY THOUGHT WAS TO GET AWAY AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE...

WHAT AM I AFRAID OF? BAKER'S DEAD NOW... AND I'VE GOT MARILYN FOR MYSELF.

THE NEXT DAY, JACK BURTON KEPT TO HIS ROOM, OPPRESSED BY A STRANGE, UNREASONED DREAD. THAT NIGHT, JUST BEFORE STAGE TIME...

M-MARILYN... I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU,

YOU DO? ALL RIGHT...



FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE... RELAX! WHAT ARE YOU SHAKY ABOUT?

MARILYN... LISTEN! I DID IT... I KILLED HIM!

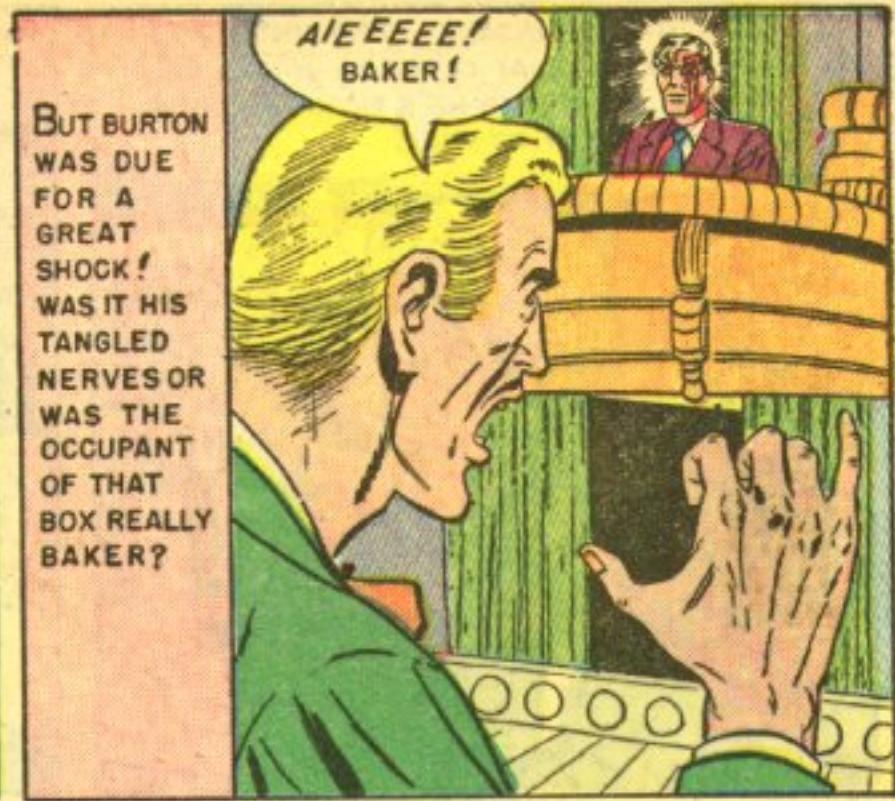


I DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD IT IN

I KEEP FEELING HE'S STILL HERE... BUT WHY BE NERVOUS NOW... IT'S ALL OVER WITH.



BURTON'S FEARS DIMINISHED UNDER MARILYN'S RIDICULE! THEN THE STAGE MANAGER CALLED AND SAID THAT JACK BURTON WAS DUE ON-STAGE.



JACK
BURTON
RAN
ALL
THE
WAY
BACK
TO HIS
CAR...

I'M GOING INSANE... I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO THAT CRYPT. HE MUST HAVE ESCAPED! AND HE'S TRYING TO DRIVE ME OUT OF MY MIND!



LOCKED! I'LL GET THE CARETAKER TO LET ME IN!



I'VE GOT THE KEYS HERE, ALL RIGHT... BUT I CAN'T LET YOU IN A CRYPT.

I'VE GOT TO GET IN THERE...

IF YOU WANT TO GET IN THAT CRYPT SO BADLY, WHY DON'T YOU GO TO THE WATSON HOUSE. IT'S THEIR MOTHER THAT WAS BURIED IN THERE THIS MORNING.

BUT GETTING INTO THE NOW LOCKED CRYPT WAS NOT AN EASY THING...



ALL RIGHT... ALL RIGHT! I'LL BE BACK!



THE DRIVE TO THE WATSON RESIDENCE WAS ALMOST A NIGHTMARE. ON HIS ARRIVAL... HIS WORDS TUMBLED OUT... ONE AFTER ANOTHER...

THE CRYPT IN THE CEMETERY, MR. WATSON... I NEED YOUR PERMISSION TO GET IN...

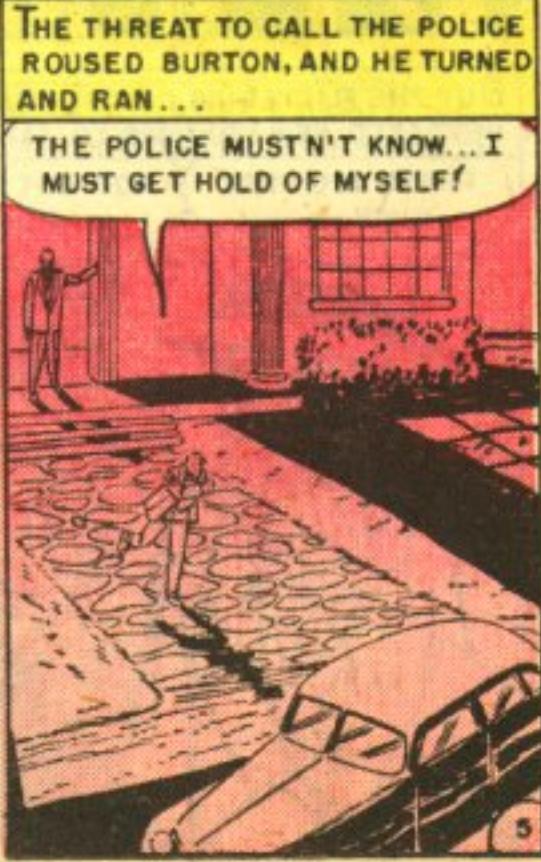
HOW DARE YOU INTRUDE AT A TIME LIKE THIS!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP ME... I'LL GO OUT OF MY MIND!

GET OUT OF HERE... OR I'LL CALL THE POLICE!

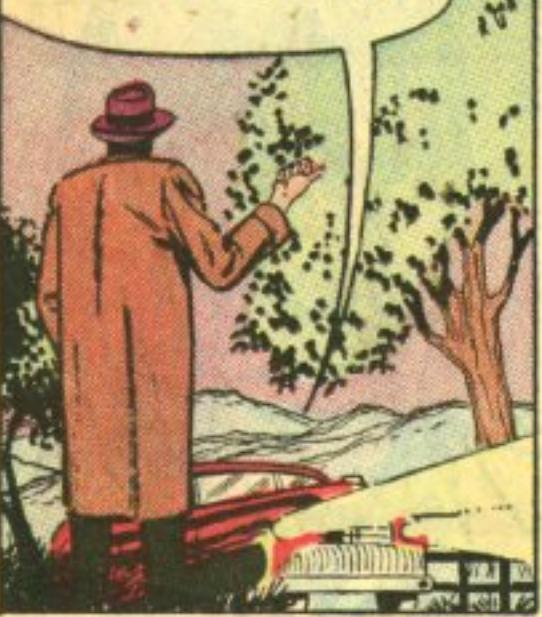
THE THREAT TO CALL THE POLICE ROUSED BURTON, AND HE TURNED AND RAN...

THE POLICE MUSTN'T KNOW... I MUST GET HOLD OF MYSELF!



BURTON DECIDED THE SAFEST THING TO DO WOULD BE TO GET AWAY FROM TOWN...

THERE'S SOMEONE WHO WANTS A LIFT... I COULD USE A LITTLE COMPANY RIGHT NOW.



THE SIGHT OF WHAT APPEARED TO BE BAKER BY THE ROADSIDE WAS THE FINAL BLOW THAT SHATTERED THE LAST STRAIN OF REASON IN JACK BURTON...

I'LL KILL HIM AGAIN... GOT TO GET INTO THE CRYPT...



I TOLD YOU BEFORE THAT YOU'RE NOT GETTING THE KEY, SO...

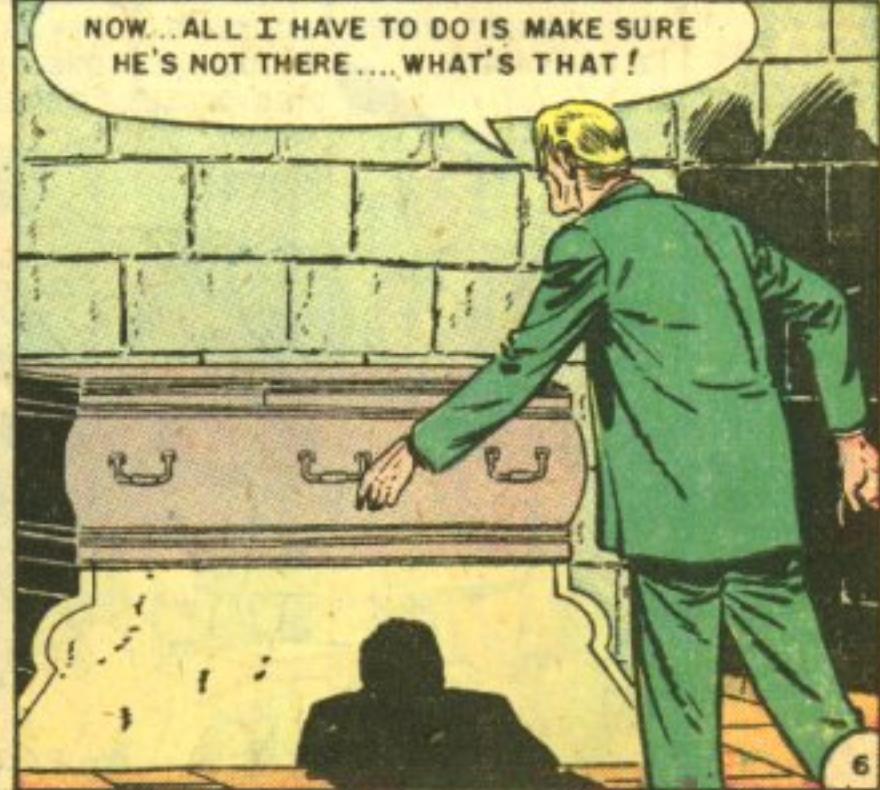
I'M GETTING THOSE KEYS! YOU'RE JUST LIKE THE REST!



ONCE I KNOW YOU'RE NOT IN HERE... I WON'T BE AFRAID OF YOU ANYMORE...

NOW... ALL I HAVE TO DO IS MAKE SURE HE'S NOT THERE.... WHAT'S THAT?

LEAVING THE CARE-TAKER TO BLEED TO DEATH, BURTON WAS READY TO ENTER THE CRYPT.



THERE WAS A FOOTSTEP
OUTSIDE THE CRYPT...



I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU
FOR A LONG TIME.



DON'T WORRY... I'M NOT GOING TO
TOUCH YOU. I'M NOT EVEN GOING
ANYWHERE NEAR YOU! IN FACT,
I'M GOING TO LEAVE YOU ALL ALONE!



THE FIGURE
OF BAKER
STEPPED
BACK AND
SLAMMED
THE DOOR
OF THE
CRYPT SHUT.
THE TERROR
OF HIS SITU-
ATION
DAWNED ON
THE CRAZED
MURDERER...

NO! NO! I CAN'T OPEN IT
FROM THE INSIDE!



LET ME OUT!
HELP! HELP!



THE NEXT
DAY MR.
WATSON,
SPURRED
BY THE
CRAZED
ACTIONS
OF HIS
STRANGE
VISITOR,
REVISITED
THE CRYPT
OF HIS
DEAD
WIFE.
AND...

THIS IS JUST WHERE
I FOUND HIM.

LOOKS AS
THOUGH HE
DIED OF
FRIGHT!

HEY, MITCH,
COME OVER
HERE!



ANOTHER CORPSE! I'LL NEVER FIGURE OUT HOW
A GUY WHO GOT SUCH A BANG
ON HIS HEAD AS THIS, COULD
HAVE DIED SMILING!



JOHN UNTER, THE ONE-CRIMINAL CRIME WAVE! THEY CALLED HIM THAT, AND THE TERRORIZED LITTLE VILLAGE OF MOSSY GLEN WAS THANKFUL WHEN, OUT OF THE STORM, A LIGHTNING BOLT LEAPED DOWN AND KILLED HIM! CAN THE DEAD SOMETIMES BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE LIVING? JOHN UNTER WAS DEAD, BUT THEN THERE WAS THE GRISLY, BLOOD-CHILLING THING...

THE MONSTER OF THE STORM



EIGHT MILES TO MOSSY GLEN! GUESS I MIGHT AS WELL GIVE THAT FELLA A LIFT!

PETE TORRENCE,
DRIVING
HIS LONG
DISTANCE
TRUCK,
STOPS FOR
A HITCH-
HIKER!



AIN'T SUPPOSED TO TAKE NO RIDERS! BUT A GUY CAN'T KEEP DRIVIN' A TRUCK ALL NIGHT WITHOUT TALKIN' TO SOMEBODY!

THANKS A LOT!



SAY, IF YOU LIVE AROUND HERE, MAYBE YOU GOT IDEAS ON THAT STORM MONSTER BUSINESS! FELLA IN AN ALL NIGHT LUNCHROOM WAS TELLIN' ME ABOUT IT, LAST TRIP THROUGH! 'COURSE I DON'T BELIEVE MONSTER? WHAT MONSTER?

IN SUCH THINGS MYSELF, BUT...

SEEMS IT BEGAN A FEW MONTHS AGO! ACCORDING TO THE WAY THEY TELL IT, THIS HERE MOSSY GLEN IS HAUNTED BY A HORRIBLE MURDERIN' GHOST-THING! THEY CALL IT MONSTER OF THE STORM! IT ONLY COMES OUT ON STORMY NIGHTS!



GUESS IT
WAS ABOUT
LAST MAY!
MAN WHO
LIVED IN
MOSSY
GLEN, NICE
QUIET
FELLA NAMED JOHN
UNTER! NOBODY
NOTICED HIM MUCH!
TRADESPEOPLE SAID
HE WAS SORT OF
QUEER...ALWAYS GET-
TIN' ANNOYED AT
SOME LITTLE THING!
THEN ONE MORNING,
IN THE DRUG STORE...



THAT FELLA SURE DID BUST
LOOSE AN' TURN HIMSELF INTO
A ONE-CRIMINAL CRIME WAVE!

GOT
HIM! HEY, THERE,
WHA...? YEOW!



THEN HE RAN INTO TONY'S BARBERSHOP NEXT DOOR... SO
YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP ME
WAITING EVERYTIME I WANT
MY HAIR CUT, DO YOU?



NOBODY CAN INSULT JOHN
UNTER AND
LIVE TO
BOAST
OF IT!



THAT WAS QUITE SOME MORNING IN MOSSY GLENN...

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS FOR MOUSY HAMBURGERS!
NOBODY CAN DO THAT TO JOHN UNTER!

IT'S JOHN
UNTER! HE'S
GONE CRAZY!

HE'LL KILL US!
HELP! HELP!



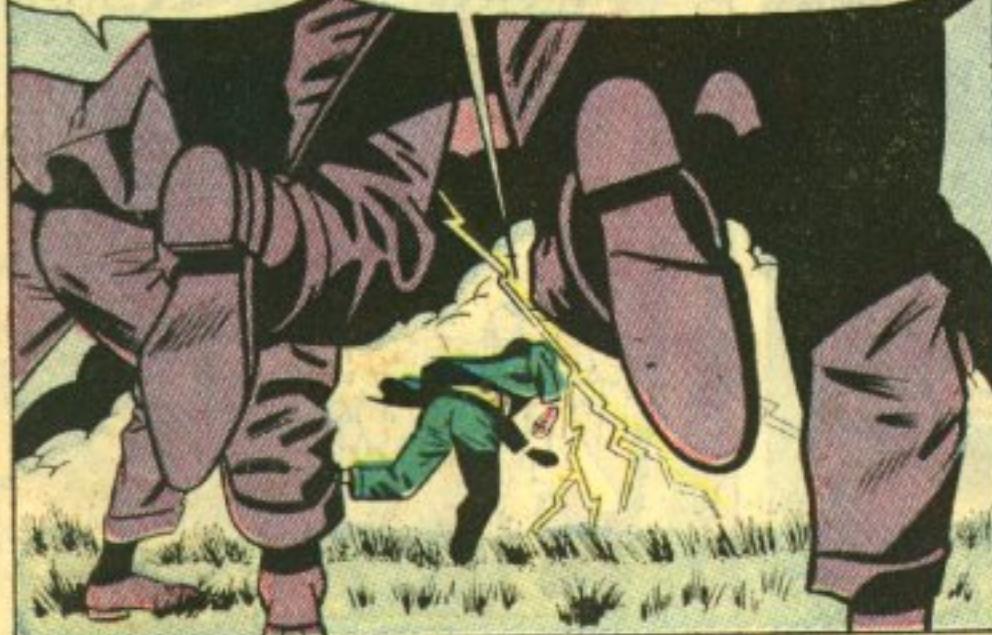
THEY COULDN'T CATCH HIM...

THERE HE GOES!
WE CAN HEAD HIM OFF AROUND
THE BLOCK!
NOBODY CAN
STOP ME! NEVER! I'LL
KILL THEM ALL!



He FINALLY HEADED OUT OF TOWN! BY THAT TIME THE SHERIFF
WAS WITH THE MEN CHASIN' HIM!

THERE HE GOES
INTO THE WOODS!
NOBODY CAN EVER STOP ME!
NOTHING CAN STOP ME! HA! HA!



A SUDDEN THUNDER STORM HAD COME UP,
AND...



THE LIGHTNING BOLT KILLED HIM! HE WAS DEAD
ALL RIGHT, NO ARGUMENT ON THAT...

STRUCK BY LIGHTNING! SAME HE'S DEAD! WELL,
THING AS THE CHAIR! THAT'S A BLESS-
ONLY QUICKER!

LITTLE
MOSSY GLEN
BREATHED
AGAIN! THEY
BURIED
JOHN UNTER
OVER IN THE
ROLLINS-
VILLE CEM-
ETARY, AN'
EVERYBODY
THOUGHT
THAT WAS
THE END OF
IT! SHERIFF
JOHNSON
DID, UNTIL
ONE NIGHT...

UNTER!?
NO! NO.
IT CAN'T BE!
IT CAN'T!
YOU--YOU'RE
DEAD!
YES!
EEE--AAAH!



IT WAS RAINING OUTSIDE NOW! AN ELECTRIC STORM HAD COME UP, WITH LIGHTNING FLARES AND THUNDER CRACKS!

CRASH!

NO! NO!

As the thunder crashed and the lightning glare brightened the little room, a terrible change was taking place in Unter...

NO! NO!
HELP!

EEDOWW!

EVEN DEATH CANNOT STOP ME! HA! HA!



AND A FEW MINUTES LATER, DOWN THE STREET IN MCCOY'S LUNCH-ROOM...

OKAY, BUT I'M TELLIN' YER I SEEN IT! JUST NOW-- FLOATIN' OUT OF THE SHERIFF'S HOUSE! THE GHOST OF JOHN UNTER! AN' HE LOOKED AWFUL! I NEVER SEEN SUCH A--

WHAT YOU BEEN DRINKIN', CHARLIE?

I'LL BET YOU DIDN'T! HA, HA!

GIVE HIM A CUP O' COFFEE MAG, HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT! HA, HA!

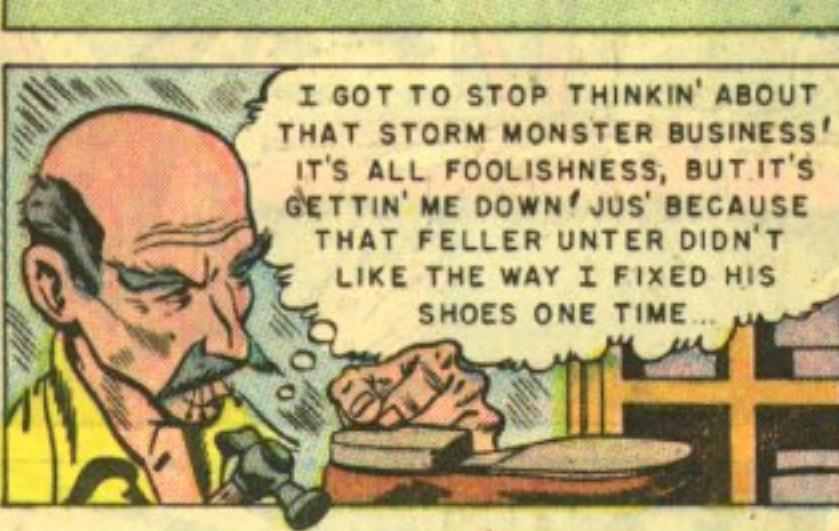
OKAY, BUT I DID SEE IT! IT'S GREEN, LIKE LIGHTNIN'! IT'S-- IT'S-- EEEEEOOW! LOOKIT THERE!



THERE WAS A BRIGHT LIGHTNING FLARE AND LOUD THUNDER CRASH AT THAT INSTANT, AND...



THAT CRASHING THUNDERCLAP SEEMED TO BE JUST ABOUT THE END OF THE STORM, AND IN ANOTHER MOMENT...



IN MOSSY GLEN NOW, THEY SAY THAT MONSTER APPEARS WITH EVERY BIG STORM! SURE SOUNDS CRAZY TO ME!

MY CHANCE AGAIN! HA! HA!



YEAH, LIKE I SAY, SURE SOUNDS CRAZY TO ME! WE'RE PRETTY NEAR TO MOSSY GLEN NOW! WHERE'LL I DROP YOU?

OH... ANYWHERE! THANKS!



HELLO, IT'S RAINING! I GOTTA PULL UP A MINUTE AN' FIX MY FOOL WINDSHIELD WIPER! IT GETS STUCK!



I SHOUDA FIXED THAT WIPER BACK IN ROLLINSVILLE CEMETARY, RIGHT ABOUT WHERE I PICKED YOU UP, REMEMBER? THAT'S WHERE JOHN UNTER IS BURIED!

IS IT?



HEY, NO NEED TO GET OUT! I GOT IT FIXED!



NO! THAT'S CRAZY... I... DON'T BELIEVE IN...?!

HA! HA!



HELP!



THE END

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SEND STRIP OF PAPER TO SHOW RING SIZE.



KILL A WITCH!

When Hinchley saw the snake he screamed and ran wildly down the path. I took out after him, and in a few seconds caught up with him. I grabbed his arm and spun him around. He was shaking with fear.

"What's the matter with you, Hinch?" I barked at him, "You're not afraid of a King snake, are you?"

He cried out weakly, as if talking to someone else, "Not yet. Not yet, please."

"Snap out of it. That snake won't hurt you." He was still shaking and moaning. "All right," I added, "stay here while I go back up there and chase it away." And that's all I would do. I wouldn't kill a snake if my life depended on it.

I walked up close to the reptile, making as much noise as I could, and as I expected, it glided swiftly off the path and into the woods.

Then I headed back toward Hinchley. "It's gone now, Hinch. Let's get going."

I started back up the path with Hinch, still very much frightened and dazed, plodding along at my heels. I glanced back at him, and the poor guy was peering all around as if he expected that snake to pop out of the woods at any moment and attack him.

"What ails you, Hinch?" I mumbled. "I've seen you catch rattlers and moccasins with your bare hands to win a screwy bet, and along comes a snake that's as harmless as a fishworm and you run away and scream your head off like a frightened schoolgirl."

He didn't say a word, just kept on shuffling along cautiously as if sudden death awaited his every step.

After about ten minutes of walking, during which neither of us spoke, we

arrived at the railroad. Hinchley broke the silence.

"The freights slow down here," he said. He seemed somewhat calmer as we seated ourselves in the little grassy clearing alongside the tracks, but there was still a trace of fear..... fear of a King snake?

"Look, Hinch," I said. "We've knocked around together for quite a while. If something's bothering you, why not get it off your chest? I may not be able to help you, but I am a good listener,"

"You'll think I'm crazy like the rest of them did," he snapped. "But I'm not! It really happened!"

"What happened, Hinch?" I coaxed. "Tell me."

And he told me. I'll never forget the wild scared look in his eyes as he stammered out his story."

"It was several years ago," he began, "I was put in jail in a small town in Georgia on a vagrancy charge. I was sulking in my cell when the local police brought in another prisoner and locked him in a cell across from me.

I figured I'd have someone to talk to for a while, so I politely asked him what he was in for.

"I killed a witch tonight, he growled at me.

I laughed. I know I shouldn't have, but it sounded so ridiculous—witches in this day and age!

"Look Mac," he snarled, "it ain't funny. So how about shutting your trap now and letting me alone?" So I did as he said and shut up.

Night came on, and there wasn't a peep out of the witch killer until very late when the dim silence of the old jail was broken by a terrified scream

from his cell.

No one came back to see what was happening. All of the cops must have been out looking for more vagrants or something. I strained my eyes against the dim corridor light to see what was going on.

The killer had picked up his stool and, cursing loudly, was batting it furiously against the floor.

By this time I thought he was completely nuts, and then I saw it—a King snake about a yard long was in his cell, and he was trying to kill it with his stool, but the snake skillfully evaded every blow.

Then that snake coiled in the corner and spoke! It actually talked, in a thin high cracked feminine voice!

'I've come to get you, Larkin,' it said to the prisoner. 'I am going to eat you.'

Larkin dropped his stool and stood there trembling and mumbling things I couldn't catch. Then he seemed to get hold of himself and laughed.

'I must be nuts!' he shouted. 'The witch is dead. She can't harm me now!'

'Ah, you forget, Larkin, the powers of a witch,' the snake cooed. 'Even in death I can take the form of an animal. All humans are reincarnated in the animal form most akin to their personalities. Being evil, but not evil enough to take the shape of a venomous serpent, I have become this seemingly harmless constrictor, the King snake.'

Larkin, frightened though he was, laughed again.

'How can such a small snake as you swallow a six foot man like myself?' he asked in a sneering tone.

'Are you really that tall?' the snake asked tauntingly.

It was then that I realized that Larkin was shrinking. He was no longer the big man so recently locked in the cell. He was actually growing smaller and smaller, and his clothes seemed to shrink with him. Larkin dumbfoundedly noticed his change in size.

'Another of the powers granted me

by Satan,' the coiled form said. 'Soon you'll be just right for me, Larkin.'

Larkin screamed, a high piercing scream as might come from the throat of a midget, and tried to squeeze his tiny body through the bars of his cell. He struggled and pushed, and the snake laughed at him in a hideous cackling manner that made more shivers run up my already shivering spine.



Then she struck and sank her teeth in his shoulder and threw him viciously across the cell up against the wall. She must have broken his back, because he couldn't move—just sat in a heap about six inches high staring dazedly across his cell.

The snake darted out, caught him again and threw her coils around his helpless body. I could see the pressure being put on and hear faint high-pitched screams of agony intermingled with a sound as of chicken bones being broken and torn.

Then she relaxed her coils and took Larkin's motionless and broken little body into her mouth head first and started to swallow him whole, and down he went in slow undulating movements.

The fascination was over for me, and I lost my head. I screamed loud and long. With Larkin fully consumed the reptile looked sleepily over toward me. I was terrified.

'I have no fear now,' she said. 'I have eaten well tonight, but since you have unwittingly observed this work of my master, Satan, you too must some day suffer the same fate.' And with that she crawled sluggishly into the corner where she coiled and seemingly

went to sleep.

I must have passed out then. The next thing I knew there was a noisy commotion in the corridor.

A rough voice barked out, 'Larkin's gone!'

Another voice snapped at me, 'What happened? How did he get out?'

'He didn't!' I screamed. 'He's in that snake!' And I pointed to the corner where the snake still lay sleeping off its grisly meal.

'Kill it! Kill it! Open its belly. That's where Larkin is'. I must have sounded quite mad as I babbled out the entire story to them.

'This guy is crazy as a loon,' the rough voice said. But one of the policemen went into the cell and easily clubbed the snake to death. Then, laughing at me, he slit the creature's stomach. There in the snake was a large freshly killed rat.



'There's a bunch of them rats around here,' the rough voice said. 'This guy is really whacky.'

'No!' I screamed, 'Larkin must have been alive when he was swallowed and then died in the snake's stomach. He was reincarnated as a rat!'

No one would believe my story, and I was locked up in an insane asylum. Finally after a couple years of that I lied to the doctors and denied the whole affair, and for this I was judged sane and set free.

I thought that after I was released everything would be all right. I had seen the evil snake killed, therefore she could never harm me. Then one day when I was working in a Carolina lumber camp I was startled in the woods by a King snake exactly like

the one which ate Larkin. It spoke to me!

'Ah, Hinchley, you recognize me,' it said, and it even knew my name. 'It won't be too long now. I'll soon be hungry.' And with that it slithered off into the brush.

Now I was more terrified than ever. My days were numbered. Just after that I started to knock around with you, and since you know my story you probably think I'm crazy too. But it did happen. It really did!"

Well, I couldn't believe him either, but I did make an attempt to make him think I believed. Poor Hinch. Harmless, but nutty as a pecan roll.

Like clockwork the freight we were waiting for popped into view. We ran back out of sight until the forward end of the train had passed us. Then, seeing an open boxcar, we made a dash for it and were soon not-too-comfortably quartered in the empty car.

It was soon dark and I stretched out on the hard floor to try and get some sleep. Hinchley just sat quietly up against the side of the car.

I woke up just after dawn. "Hinch," I said, "let's get ready to get out of here. Hinch! Where are you? Did that crazy fool fall out of this wagon?"

He was nowhere to be seen. I was the only one in the car, but I felt there there was something else in with me—and there was.

Just inside the shadow of the door I could see a coiled form, maybe an old rope. I walked over to it, and then I knew. A King snake was coiled in perfect contentment on the floor of the boxcar sleeping.

I prodded it with my foot, and it sluggishly unwound itself. I couldn't help but shudder when I saw the tell-tale bulge in its belly.

I reached down and grabbed it, and being the docile creature it is, it made no attempt to bite me.

"Lady," I said, "I didn't see a thing."

And then I tossed it gently out the door. I wouldn't kill a snake if my life depended on it.

7

HE HATE OF COUNTLESS CENTURIES, GROWING STRONGER WITH EACH PASSING YEAR, REACHES OUT TO FULFILL ITS MISSION...TO KILL! THOSE WHO SCOFF AND TURN AWAY FALL EASY VICTIMS TO THE EVIL THAT DEMANDS DEATH, BUT STRETCHES OUT TO THE LIVING THROUGH

THE MIRROR OF ISIS!



THE QUIET SUMMER AIR BEARS NO HINT OF THE HORROR TO COME AS BRAD STANFIELD AND HIS BRIDE MOUNT THE STEPS OF A LARGE HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A SMALL MID-WESTERN TOWN...

THIS IS IT, DARLING. I'M SURE MY GRANDFATHER WILL BE AS CRAZY ABOUT YOU AS I AM!

I-I HOPE SO... DURING A WEEK'S VISIT WE SHOULD GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER PRETTY WELL...



SO THIS IS ELYSE! - I'M SO HAPPY TO KNOW YOU, MY DEAR... WHERE ARE YOUR BAGS?

BRAD THOUGHT WE SHOULD LEAVE THEM AT THE STATION AND SEND FOR THEM LATER.

I DIDN'T WANT TO BE BURDENED WITH THEM RIGHT NOW, SIR...



AFTER THE INITIAL GREETINGS WERE OVER, BRAD'S GRANDFATHER INTRODUCED THEM TO HIS OTHER HOUSE GUEST... DR. REDMOND, THE WELL-KNOWN ARCHEOLOGIST, AND THEN THEY SAT DOWN TO DINNER...

IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME A MOMENT, I THINK I'LL GO INTO THE STUDY FOR SOME TOBACCO...

DON'T BE LONG... DR. REDMOND'S PROMISED TO TELL US SOME OF HIS EXPERIENCES IN THE EGYPTIAN TOMBS.



ABOUT TEN MINUTES LATER...

... AND THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT ARE ABSOLUTELY UNBELIEVABLE TO THE NORMAL MIND, UNLESS YOU'VE HAD SOME CONTACT WITH THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES OF EGYPT. BUT I MUST BE BORING YOU...

NOT AT ALL, DOCTOR!... I WAS JUST WONDERING WHY GRANDFATHER WAS SO LONG... AND WHAT HAPPENED TO ELYSE?



AS IF IN ANSWER TO BRAD'S QUESTION - A SCREAM OF HORROR RAN THROUGH THE ROOM...

WH-WHAT WAS THAT?

HURRY, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE!... IT CAME FROM THE STUDY!



AS THOUGH TO BELIEVE THE SUMMER SEASON, A STRANGE CHILL - AS OF THE GRAVE - FILLED THE ROOM...

WHY IS IT SO COLD IN HERE? ELYSE! WHERE'S ELYSE?

GOOD HEAVENS, MAN!... THAT MIRROR!



DR. REDMOND MOVED WITH UNEXPECTED SPEED, RUSHED TO THE STRANGE MIRROR ON THE WALL...

THERE!

WH-WHY'D YOU DO THAT?



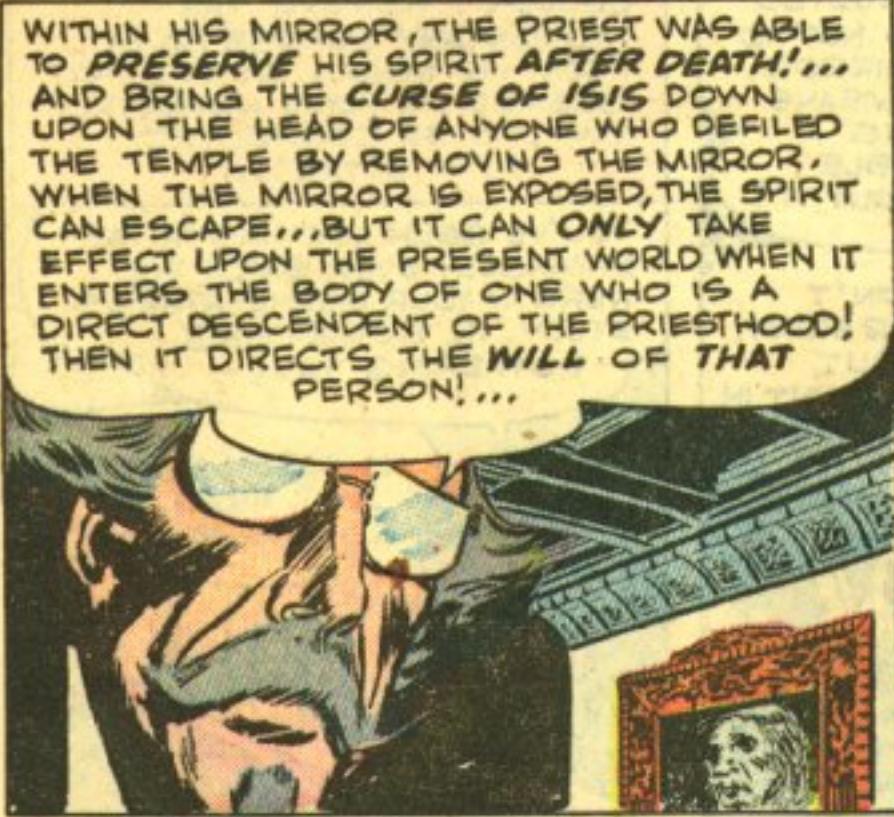
BUT BEFORE DR. REDMOND COULD EXPLAIN HIS ACTIONS...

ELYSE! I'VE BEEN SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU! -

WHY? - IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG?

DIDN'T YOU HEAR THAT SCREAM?





SEE, THERE'S
NOTHING...

WHY?



SEEING THE REFLECTION OF EVIL WHERE HE KNEW ELYSE HAD BEEN STANDING A MOMENT AGO, SHOOK BRAD'S NERVES TO THE CORE! - WITH ONE MOVEMENT, HE PULLED THE DRAPE BACK OVER THE MIRROR... AND WHIRLED!...

ELYSE!

WHAT IS IT, BRAD?
WHAT FRIGHTENED
YOU SO?...

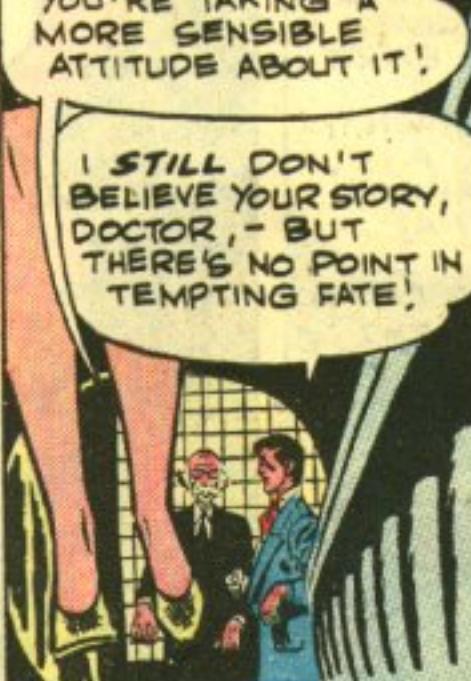
I-I DON'T KNOW...
I MUST BE SEEING
THINGS! IT MUST BE
THE POWER OF
SUGGESTION... COME
ON! - LET'S GET
OUT OF THIS
PLACE!



A SHORT WHILE LATER...

BRAD... I UNDERSTAND
YOU'VE INSTRUCTED
THE SERVANTS NOT TO
TOUCH THAT MIRROR.
I HOPE THAT MEANS
YOU'RE TAKING A
MORE SENSIBLE
ATTITUDE ABOUT IT!

I STILL DON'T
BELIEVE YOUR STORY,
DOCTOR, - BUT
THERE'S NO POINT IN
TEMPTING FATE!



BUT A SUSPICION, ONCE PLANTED, CAN FESTER LIKE AN OPEN WOUND. BRAD COULDN'T REMOVE THE MOMENTARY GLIMPSE OF EVIL FROM HIS MIND... AN EVIL THAT SEEMED IN SOME UNEARTHLY WAY, TO BE CONNECTED WITH ELYSE!...

YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING AT ME STRANGELY EVER SINCE WE WERE IN YOUR GRANDFATHER'S STUDY. IS SOMETHING BOthering YOU?

NO, DARLING... I'M JUST TIRED, I GUESS.



THAT NIGHT, BRAD WAS AWAKENED BY A FEELING OF UNEASINESS...

ELYSE! SHE'S GONE! I'D BETTER FIND HER...



BUT BRAD WAS SPARED THE NECESSITY OF SEARCHING FOR ELYSE AS HE WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE THE BEDROOM, THE FAMILIAR FIGURE OF HIS WIFE SLIPPED LIKE A SHADOW THROUGH THE DOORWAY-



THANK HEAVEN YOUR BACK! I WAS BEGINNING TO WORRY ABOUT... ELYSE! WHAT IS IT? WHY DON'T YOU SAY SOMETHING?



SLEEPWALKING! FOR
A MOMENT I
THOUGHT...WHAT AM
I THINKING?



THE NEXT DAY, BRAD
SAID NOTHING TO ELYSE
ABOUT HER SLEEPWALKING
OF THE NIGHT BEFORE,
AND WAS WITH DOCTOR
REDMOND... WHEN A
FRIGHTENED SCREAM
RENT THE AIR...

AIEEE!
BRAD! DR.
REDMOND!
COME
QUICKLY!

IT'S ELYSE!
I'M COMING,
DARLING! -



I FOUND
IT, BRAD...
IT'S SO
HORRIBLE! -
HORRIBLE!

SHH, DARLING...
DR. REDMOND AND
I WILL TAKE
CARE OF THIS.
GO UPSTAIRS
AND LIE DOWN...

IT'S ONE OF THE
SERVANTS, BRAD...
IT MUST HAVE
HAPPENED LAST
NIGHT!



THE MIRROR WAS
EXPOSED AGAIN!...
THE POOR BEGGAR
DISREGARDED YOUR
INSTRUCTIONS. NOW
DO YOU BELIEVE
ME?

I WANT TO TALK TO
YOU ABOUT IT, DR.
REDMOND. BUT, FIRST-
ELYSE, YOU GET UP
TO BED...



THE SAME MARK OF
THE SCARAB ON HIS
HEAD... THE SAME
TYPE OF DAGGER...
THE EXPOSED MIRROR!-
CAN YOU STILL DOUBT
THE EVIL OF THE
MIRROR?

RIGHT NOW...
I WISH I
COULD!
THERE'S
SOMETHING
ABOUT ELYSE
I WANT
YOU TO
KNOW...



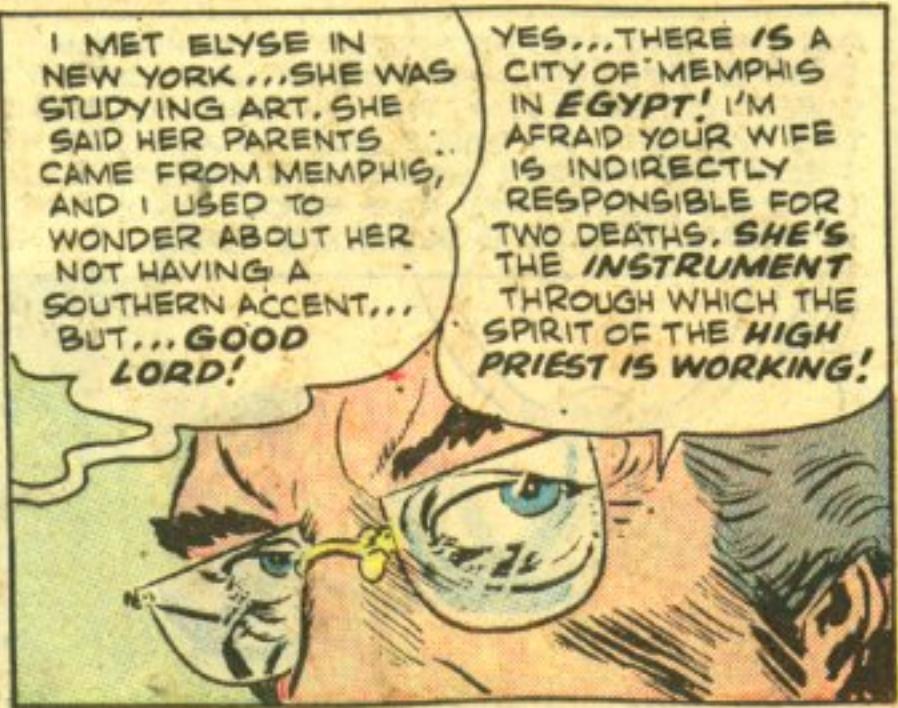
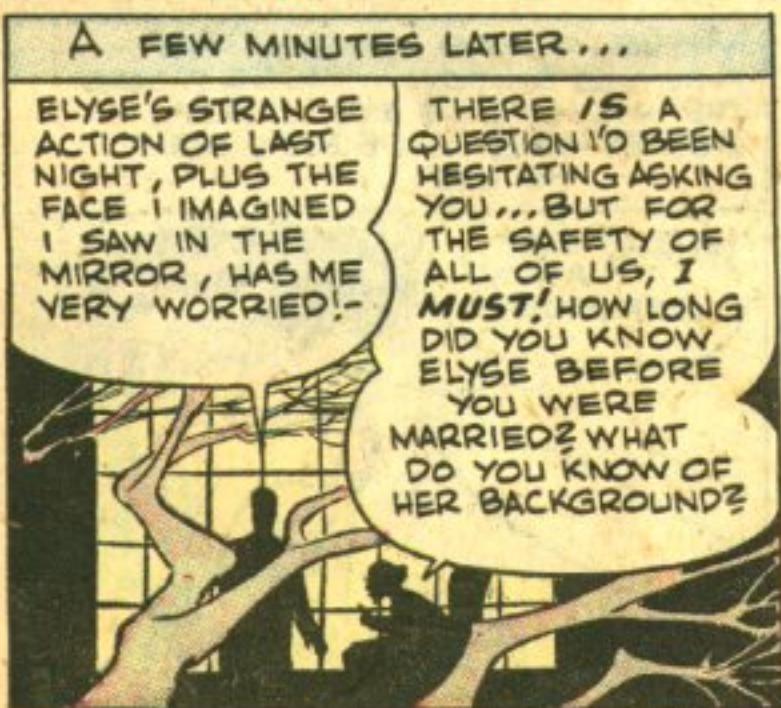
A FEW MINUTES LATER...

ELYSE'S STRANGE
ACTION OF LAST
NIGHT, PLUS THE
FACE I IMAGINED
I SAW IN THE
MIRROR, HAS ME
VERY WORRIED!-

THERE IS A
QUESTION I'D BEEN
HESITATING ASKING
YOU... BUT FOR
THE SAFETY OF
ALL OF US, I
MUST! HOW LONG
DID YOU KNOW
ELYSE BEFORE
YOU WERE
MARRIED? WHAT
DO YOU KNOW OF
HER BACKGROUND?

I MET ELYSE IN
NEW YORK... SHE WAS
STUDYING ART. SHE
SAID HER PARENTS
CAME FROM MEMPHIS,
AND I USED TO
WONDER ABOUT HER
NOT HAVING A
SOUTHERN ACCENT...
BUT... GOOD
LORD!

YES... THERE IS A
CITY OF MEMPHIS
IN EGYPT! I'M
AFRAID YOUR WIFE
IS INDIRECTLY
RESPONSIBLE FOR
TWO DEATHS. SHE'S
THE INSTRUMENT
THROUGH WHICH THE
SPIRIT OF THE HIGH
PRIEST IS WORKING!



IT'S INCREDIBLE! IT
MUST BE SO... BUT
I HAVE TO BE
SURE! AND THERE
IS A WAY!...

LISTEN, BOY...
DON'T DO
ANYTHING
FOOLISH! -



THAT NIGHT, WHILE ELYSE SLEPT SOUNDLY...

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT
ANYONE SO SWEET COULD
HAVE COMMITTED THOSE
HORRIBLE CRIMES! BUT
I'LL KNOW... SOON!



BRAD CAUTIOUSLY AND
QUIETLY MADE HIS
WAY DOWNSTAIRS TO
THE STUDY. FOR A
MOMENT, FEAR-BRED
OF AN INBORN
DREAD OF THE
UNKNOWN-MADE HIM
HESITATE...

I MUST GO THROUGH
WITH IT... BUT I'LL
FEEL BETTER WITH
A LITTLE LIGHT! -



WITH THE DISAPPEARANCE
OF TERRIFYING SHADOWS,
BRAD'S COURAGE RETURNED.
AND HE NEEDED ALL HIS
RESOLUTION TO FORCE
HIMSELF TO DRAW BACK
THE DRAPE THAT WOULD
REVEAL THE HIDDEN
HORROR OF THE MIRROR
OF ISIS!

THAT CHILL! - IT
RETURNED TO THE
ROOM AS SOON AS
I PULLED THE
DRAW-STRING!



NOW TO WAIT
FOR WHATEVER
COMES...



AS THE MINUTES DRAGGED INTO HOURS,
BRAD'S EYELIDS -HEAVY FROM LACK OF
SLEEP- CLOSED... AS THOUGH WAITING FOR
THIS MOMENT, AN EERIE GLOW EMANATED
FROM THE MIRROR! -SECONDS LATER, A
SHADOW STOLE INTO THE ROOM AND
APPROACHED BRAD'S SLEEPING FORM...



MAYBE IT WAS MERELY THE
FLEETING SHADOW... MAYBE IT WAS
THE INTENSITY OF EVIL... BUT
SOMETHING MADE BRAD OPEN
HIS EYES...

WHA-Z GET
AWAY!
GET AWAY!





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7 QUALITY FEATURES 7

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IT 10
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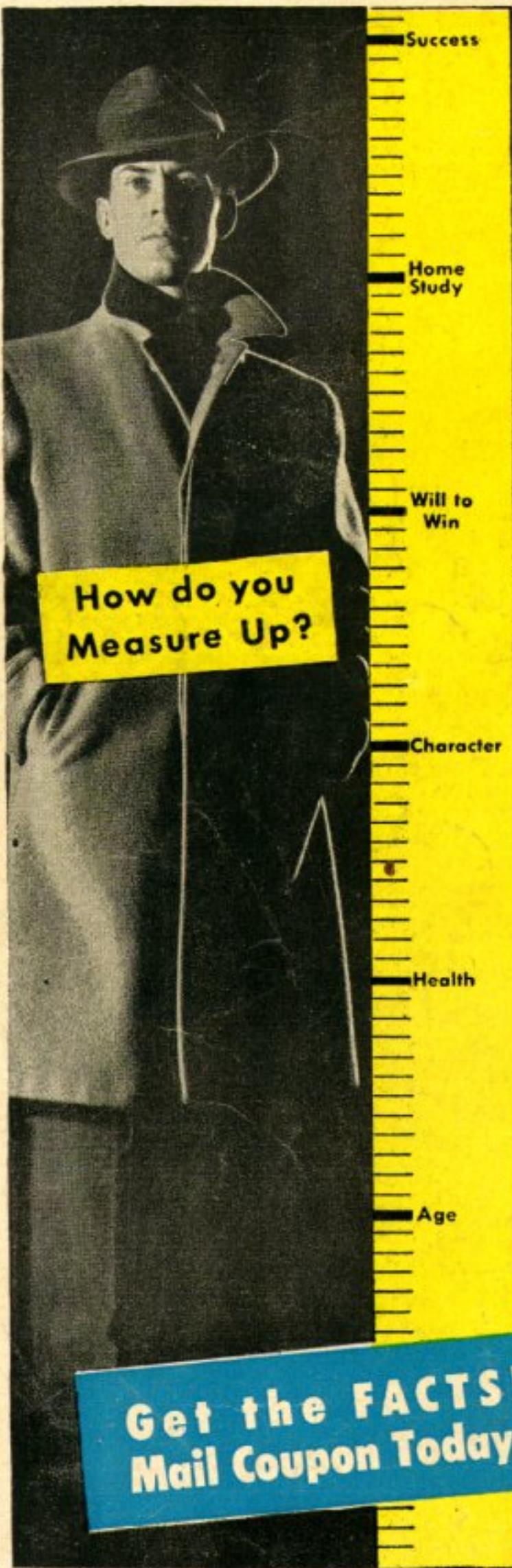
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